



A CONSUMER CONTROLLED COUNCIL COMMITTED TO
ENSURING QUALITY REHABILITATION SERVICES

REPORT OF THE NEBRASKA

State Rehabilitation Council

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) values the input and involvement of all citizens in Nebraska regarding rehabilitation services. All SRC meetings are open to the public and are a great opportunity for the public to voice concerns and opinions.

MEETINGS:

Meeting dates, times and locations are posted on the Vocational Rehabilitation web site at www.vr.ne.gov

WRITE:

State Rehabilitation Council Chairperson
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509

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State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education

October 21, 2009

Dear Fellow Nebraskans,

The past year has marked another busy and productive year for the SRC. We continued to work in close partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to ensure the needs of Nebraskans who experience a disability are being met in the most timely and efficient manner possible. At the SRC's request, VR presented information to the council on a variety of topics such as:

- The agreement between VR and the Department of Health and Human Services creating partnerships with mental health providers across the state. One such partnership is the Higher Opportunities with the Power of Employment (HOPE) Program. HOPE is a consumer driven program assisting individuals diagnosed with behavioral health disorders in obtaining and maintaining employment.
- The state plan for Nebraska State Independent Living Service. This plan will provide independent living skills training for Nebraskans experiencing a disability.
- The new video developed by VR entitled "Transition: Working with Students and Educators." The video will be used as a training tool to new VR staff working with students, parents, and school administrative staff in promoting services to transition aged youth.
- The report on the Federal stimulus money Nebraska VR received. The funds will create new and innovative services, increase existing services, and expand services to under-served groups. A portion of the money will be used for the following: to help individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), to provide forklift training, which has been identified as an area of employment with increasing job opportunities, and to help provide transportation services to the Native American population living in the eastern part of the state. Project SEARCH will be implemented using stimulus dollars. Project SEARCH is designed to provide job coaching for hospital jobs, as well as provide for supported employment services for individuals who experience autism.

The services listed above will serve a wide array of individuals and are just a small part of the great work being done across the state in assisting Nebraskans who experience a disability to gain greater independence and economic outcomes.

Respectfully,

Gayle Hahn

Gayle Hahn, Chairperson
Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council

SRC Committee Reports



Mitch Arnold—Omaha

Mitch is the President of Preferred Partners, LLC, an Omaha based recruiting company. He is a member of the SRC's Employer Services Committee.



Katie Durfee—Fairbury

Katie describes herself as a young woman who has Cerebral Palsy. She serves on the SRC's Transition Services Committee.



Teri Effle—Lincoln

Teri is employed at the Lincoln Council on Alcoholism and Drugs. She is a member of the Transition Services Committee.



Alvin Fox—McCool Junction

In addition to farming, Alvin has an in-home business making greeting cards. He is a member of the Transition Services Committee.



Susan Gieschen—Brule

Susan (Sue) has a son who experiences a learning disability. Sue is on the Employer Services Committee. In addition, she is Vice Chairperson for the Council.

Client Services Committee

Members: Les Kimmons, Tim Kolb, Leslie Novacek, Debra Osentowski, Vicki Rasmussen, and Kipp Ransom (Chair)

Don Crouch-VR Advisor

This past year our committee was very active in reviewing and implementing the consumer satisfaction surveys related to Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The following recommendations were made and implemented.

- The survey process will be explained to consumers during the VR orientation process.
- Surveys given during the career-planning phase will be eliminated.

- When consumers are given paper satisfaction surveys versus completing them electronically, they will be encouraged to fill out the survey prior to leaving the office.
- A new survey will be developed to measure consumer satisfaction three months after successful case closure.
- New questions were suggested for several of the surveys.

The committee evaluated the State Rehabilitation Council website as requested by the Council. It was found the website needed some improvements. Suggestions were made and subsequently accepted.



Kipp Ransom—Lincoln

Kipp is the Lead Counselor at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital's Spinal Cord Injury Unit. He is the Chair of the Client Services Committee.

Client Services Committee
Chairperson

Transition Services Committee

Members: Katie Durfee, Teri Effle, Alvin Fox, Gayle Hahn, Frank Lloyd, Larry Niemeyer, Vicky Obrecht, Terry Wilson, and Angela Smith (Chair)

Jack Shepard-VR Advisor

The Transition Services Committee met six times this year. The following are activities which involved the Committee.

The Transition Services Committee reviewed a draft of the Transition Individual Plan for Employment booklet and provided recommendations.

Alvin Fox, a member of the Transition Services Committee, was involved in the process of reviewing applications for the Youth Leadership Council (YLC) potential members. The YLC advisor, Kristi Berst, continues to provide the Transition Services Committee/State

Rehabilitation Council input on YLC activities.

Angela Smith, Transition Services Committee chairperson, attended the Transition Roundtable in June 2009. She spoke in support for an Autism Specialist to assist Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists statewide. The Roundtable agenda also included discussion on the training of school psychologists on verification for special education, the difficulty in maintaining contact with transition student's parent/guardian, and establishing realistic post-secondary school goals for transition students.

Additional topics of discussion for the Transition Services Committee in the last year included: increasing the number of students moving from the VR Transition program into the adult Employment Program; the initiation, development, and piloting of a transition blog in two VR field offices; and providing Transition staff at all Nebraska high schools.

Angela works for Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska. She is the Chairperson of the Transition Services Committee.

Transition Services Committee
Chairperson



Angela Smith—Kearney



Gayle Hahn—Hastings

Gayle works as a Work Incentive Specialist for Easter Seals Nebraska (ESN). She is the SRC Chairperson and is a member of the Transition Services Committee.



Les Kimmons—Omaha

Les is a Training & Information Specialist at PTI Nebraska (Parent Training and Information for Families of Children with Disabilities). He serves on the Client Services Committee.



Tim Kolb—Franklin

Tim was born with Werdnig-Hoffman Syndrome or spinal muscular atrophy. He serves on the SRC's Client Services Committee.



Larry Niemeyer—Norfolk

Larry has been employed with VR over thirty-four years. He is a member of the Transition Services Committee.



Leslie Novacek—Lincoln

Leslie is the Director of Assistive Technology Partnership. She serves on the Client Services Committee.

SRC Committee Reports



Debra Osentowski—Geneva

Debra joined the SRC as a parent of a son who has learning disabilities resulting from Epilepsy. She is a member of the Client Services Committee.



Vicki Obrecht—Lincoln

Vicki is the Special Education Coordinator for Lincoln Southeast High School with Lincoln Public Schools. She serves on the Transition Services Committee.



Vicki Rasmussen—Lincoln

Vicki is the Director of the Nebraska Client Assistance Program (CAP). She is a member of the Client Services Committee.



Terry L. Wilson—Indianola

Complications from a transplant left Terry unable to continue work. Terry contacted VR and successfully received services. He serves on the Transition Services Committee.



Pearl Van Zandt—Lincoln

Pearl is the Executive Director of the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. She serves on the Employer Services Committee.

Employer Services Committee

Members: Mitch Arnold, Sue Gieschen, Pearl Van Zandt, and Jason Kerkman (Chair)

Jim Coyle-VR Advisor

A recommendation was made to recognize Entrepreneurs of Distinction in the State of Nebraska. The award was given to individuals that have worked with VR and the Abilities Fund to become self employed. The SRC Employer Services Committee collaborated with Christine Hess from the Abilities Fund to determine award criteria and select the awardees. The four criteria for the award were profitability, contribution to the community, innovation of ideas and hiring/expansion. The awards were presented at a reception held in July. Statewide media exposure was given to the event. The Entrepreneurs of Distinction award will be awarded annually by the SRC.

In February the SRC held its annual luncheon for Senators. The luncheon educated the attendees about the services offered by VR and the

positive impact VR is having on the citizens of Nebraska.

Susie Rutkowski with Project SEARCH (based in Cincinnati) provided training to hospital staff at four sites across the state. The training helps hospitals develop better hiring practices and training opportunities for individuals with disabilities. In addition to VR, other partners in the program include local school districts, the NE Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Assistive Technology Partnership and NE Developmental Disabilities. The Project SEARCH program helps Nebraska's students with disabilities develop work skills that will lead to long-term employment.

October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The SRC honored employers statewide that have worked successfully with VR to employ individuals with disabilities. The SRC Employer Services Committee requested nominees from all the VR teams for the "National Disability Employment Awareness Month" award and the recognition events were held in October 2009.



Jason Kerkman—Lincoln

Jason is a Workforce Coordinator with Nebraska's Department of Labor. He is the Chairperson of the SRC's Employer Services Committee.

Employer Services Committee
Chairperson

Annual Program Costs

	Cost of Program
Administration	\$3,560,892.00

CLIENT SERVICES

	Cost of Program
Provided by VR Staff	\$11,808,557.00
Purchased from Community Rehab Programs	\$1,377,706.00
Purchased from Other Vendors	\$6,028,753.00
Total	\$19,215,016.00

PURCHASED FOR CLIENTS

	Cost of Program
Assessment	\$768,244.00
Higher Education	\$2,016,122.00
Miscellaneous Training	\$1,888,906.00
Maintenance	\$159,055.00
Personal Assistance Services	\$14,136.00
Transportation	\$ 363,957.00
Rehabilitation Technology Services	\$1,934,201.00
Small Business Enterprise	\$53,267.00
All Other Services	\$208,570.00
Total	\$7,406,458.00

Best Wishes Frank-



Frank Lloyd

The State Rehabilitation Council had the opportunity to recognize Frank Lloyd for his more than forty-two years of service to vocational

rehabilitation. Fifteen of those years were served with Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation. The SRC appreciates Frank's dedication in serving the vocational needs of people who experience a disability. Good luck Frank and best wishes on your retirement.

Welcome Mark-



Mark Schultz

The SRC welcomes Mark Schultz as the new Director of Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Mark began his career at the Center

for Independent Living. He then served as the Director of the Assistive Technology Partnership from 1989 to June of 2008 when he was selected to be Associate Director of VR. He was appointed the Director of VR in October 2009. Mark has a Bachelors of Science in Architectural Studies and a Masters in Public Administration. He has more than twenty years of experience advocating for people with disabilities at both a state and national level.

Nebraskans Served by Vocational Rehabilitation

CONSUMERS SERVED BY LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

District	Total	Percent
1.....	117	1.9
2.....	82	1.4
3.....	44	0.7
4.....	33	0.6
5.....	120	2.0
6.....	59	1.0
7.....	113	1.9
8.....	114	1.9
9.....	118	2.0
10.....	117	1.9
11.....	182	3.0
12.....	40	0.7
13.....	97	1.6
14.....	41	0.7
15.....	89	1.5
16.....	95	1.6
17.....	176	2.9
18.....	172	2.9
19.....	304	5.1
20.....	46	0.8
21.....	81	1.3
22.....	261	4.3
23.....	122	2.0
24.....	129	2.1
25.....	104	1.7
26.....	119	2.0
27.....	89	1.5
28.....	346	5.8
29.....	148	2.5
30.....	107	1.8
31.....	37	0.6
32.....	138	2.3
33.....	285	4.7
34.....	102	1.7
35.....	209	3.5
36.....	161	2.7
37.....	192	3.2
38.....	85	1.4
39.....	26	0.4
40.....	137	2.3
41.....	137	2.3
42.....	158	2.6
43.....	115	1.9
44.....	70	1.1
45.....	43	0.7
46.....	105	1.7
47.....	92	1.5
48.....	156	2.6
49.....	106	1.7

Total Served 6019

NOTE: This does not include 4,794 served in the Transition Program or 6,099 served in the Employment Warranty® Program.

FUNDING

Every \$1.00 appropriated for Vocational Rehabilitation by the Unicameral earns \$3.69 Federal funding and yields \$4.69 in services to Nebraskans with disabilities.

THE AVERAGE WAGE FOR SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED VR CLIENTS

Average wage for 2009 **\$10.29**

59% of clients are employed full-time

2009 NEBRASKA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
Applied for Services	5,013
Eligible for Services	4,428
Started Services	2,819
Received Services	6,019
Successfully Employed	1,568
Continuing in Services	3,442

2009 PROGRAM CATEGORIES

Employment Program	6,019
Transition Program	4,794
Employment Warranty® Program	6,099

2009 OCCUPATION & EARNINGS FOR COMPETITIVELY EMPLOYED CONSUMERS

Occupations	Percent	Average Hourly Earnings
Services	33.4%	\$8.30
Office Support	18.0%	\$9.49
Professional	10.3%	\$13.94
Sales	9.8%	\$8.43
Transportation & Material Moving	8.6%	\$10.18
Production	7.2%	\$10.39
Installation, Maintenance & Repairs	4.7%	\$11.23
Management, Business & Finance	3.5%	\$13.58
Construction & Extraction	2.8%	\$11.02
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	1.5%	\$10.49
Military	0.3%	\$15.08

Partnerships with Employers & Vocational Rehabilitation

SOME OF THE COMPANIES WORKING WITH NEBRASKA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Affiliated Foods Midwest	Husqvarna	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Alegent Health	Hy-Vee	Vishay Dale
Allmand Brothers, Inc.	InfoUSA	Vulcraft Group
Ameritas Group	Kawasaki	Walgreens
Amcon Distributing Co.	Lincoln Journal Star	Wal-Mart Distribution Center
Apogee Retail, LLC	Lindsay Manufacturing Co.	Wal-Mart Stores
Associated Staffing Inc.	Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital	Werner Enterprises, Inc.
Behlen Mfg. Co.	Methodist Hospital	West Corporation
Blue Ox	Nebraska Game & Parks Commission	Western Nebraska Community College
Broyhill	Nebraska Machine Products	Wimmer's Meat Products Inc.
Bosselman Travel Centers	New Holland North America, Inc	
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway	Norfolk Iron & Metal Co.	2009 Successful Self-Employment Businesses-
Cabela's	Omaha Tribe of Nebraska	Tree Removal Business, Columbus
Chief Industries, Inc.	Pamida	Mobil Upholstery Repair, Lincoln
CVS Pharmacy	Pay Pal	Power Washing Services, Omaha
EGS Electrical Group	Reinke Manufacturing, Inc.	Cattle Ranching, North Platte
Faith Regional Health Services	Russell Speeder's Car Wash	Auto Detailing, North Platte
First National Bank	Safeway	Truck Driver Business, Norfolk
First Tier Bank	Saint Elizabeth Regional Health Center	Over the Road Pilot Service, Grand Island
Fremont Area Medical Center	Saint Francis Medical Center	Disability Advocacy Company, Omaha
General Excavating	Samuelson Equipment Co.	Game Inventor, Lincoln
Godfather's Pizza	Sehnert's Bakery & Bieroc Cafe	Computer Services, Lincoln
Good Samaritan Hospital	Spherion	Home Inspection/Repairs, Omaha
Great Plains Regional Medical Center	Tabitha Health Care Services	Cowboy Boot Mfg., Scottsbluff
Hamilton Communication	Target	Housekeeping, Grand Island
Heritage Homes of Nebraska, Inc.	Torin Products, Inc.	Inventor, Norfolk
Home Depot	TravelCenters of America	
Hughes Brothers, Inc.	University of Nebraska-Kearney	

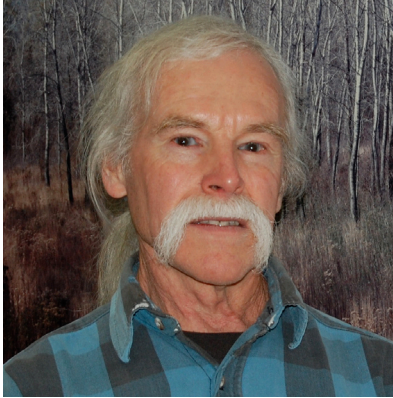
Return on Investment for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program

On average, a successfully employed person **returns \$9.75** to the taxpayers for every **\$1 spent** through Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Average cost of vocational rehabilitation services per person:	\$14,525.45
Average Annual Earnings after vocational rehabilitation services:	\$ 17,098.94
Estimated Annual Taxes on earnings:	
Federal Income Tax	\$ 1,326.84
State Income Tax	\$ 494.88
State/Local Sales Tax	\$ 285.09
Social Security Tax	\$ 2,616.24
Average Total Taxes per Year	\$ 4,723.05
Average Return to Taxpayers over 30 remaining years of employment	\$141,691.50

Vocational Rehabilitation

Client Success Stories



CHARLES MCINTOSH

After years of being an activist for the Nebraska ecosystem, “Buffalo Bruce” as he was nicknamed, wanted to turn his passion into a full-time job.

“Buffalo Bruce” McIntosh was born with Osteogenesis imperfecta, which is a brittle bone disease that has affected his mobility and keeps him from maintaining a full-time job. He contacted the VR office in Scottsbluff for counseling services and was also referred by VR to Assistive Technology Partnership for modifications to his home.

Bruce is the Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Western Nebraska Resources Council and lives in Chadron, NE. He spends his time educating students across the state about environmental issues.

“Voc Rehab is helping me fulfill my dreams of working with and enhancing students’ minds to get them outdoors to the wildland and educate them. It also provides more freedom for me and I couldn’t do it as well without them,” McIntosh said.



DANIELE WILLIAMS

Daniele Williams contacted the VR office in Lincoln. She had carpal tunnel syndrome, diabetes, and other health issues affecting her ability to work. Daniele realized her lifelong dream of owning her own home-based business with the help of VR.

Daniele’s BodySole was established to meet the needs of plus-sized women looking for affordable and fashionable lingerie, loungewear, and footwear.

VR assisted Daniele in formulating her business plan and helped give her the tools she needed to run the business successfully.

“VR helped me find myself. They gave me the education to find out my other strength, what I was good at,” Williams commented. “One of my strengths is being a business owner, and it was one of my dreams. So, they helped me with my strength and my dream and Voc Rehab has definitely been a blessing.”



LUCAS PEDRO

Lucas Pedro was unlike any other student in the Grand Island area. He moved to the United States from Guatemala when he was 10 years old. Because Lucas has a developmental disability and spoke no English, school was difficult for him. He contacted the VR office in Grand Island for help.

Lucas enrolled in Project SEARCH at St. Francis Medical Center in Grand Island. Project SEARCH is a program designed to teach developmentally disabled students about keeping a job while providing hands-on experience in a workplace environment.

Lucas works Monday through Friday in the Wound Care and Short Stay Surgery Department of the hospital. He also translates for patients who don’t speak English.

“I like it because I like helping out elderly people,” Pedro said. “I like talking to them and making them feel comfortable that we can take care of them.”

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Columbus serves counties:

Butler, Colfax, Nance, Platte and Polk
3020 18th Street, Ste 2, Columbus, NE 68601
(402) 562-8065 V/TTY, (877) 505-0866 V/TTY
VR.Info.Columbus@nebraska.gov

Fremont serves counties:

Dodge
2951 North Clarkson Street, Fremont, NE 68025
(402) 727-2900 V, (888) 585-5439 V
VR.Info.Fremont@nebraska.gov

Grand Island serves counties:

Adams, Clay, Fillmore, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton,
Howard, Merrick, Nuckolls, Thayer, Webster, York
3335 West Capital Avenue, Grand Island, NE 68803
(308) 385-6200 V/TTY, (800) 862-3382 V/TTY
VR.Info.GrandIsland@nebraska.gov

Kearney serves counties:

Blaine, Buffalo, Custer, Franklin, Furnas, Garfield,
Harlan, Kearney, Loup, Phelps, Sherman, Valley
315 W 60th Street, Ste 400, Kearney, NE 68845
(308) 865-5343 V/TTY, (800) 262-3382 V/TTY
VR.Info.Kearney@nebraska.gov

Lincoln serves counties:

Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe,
Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Saunders, Seward
3901 N 27th Street, Ste 6, Lincoln, NE 68521
(402) 471-3231 V/TTY
(800) 472-3382 V/TTY
VR.Info.Lincoln@nebraska.gov

Norfolk serves counties:

Antelope, Boone, Boyd, Brown, Burt, Cedar, Cuming,
Dixon, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Rock,
Stanton, Wayne, Wheeler
1212 Benjamin Avenue, Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 370-3200 V/TTY, (800) 442-3382 V/TTY
VR.Info.Norfolk@nebraska.gov

North Platte serves counties:

Arthur, Chase, Cherry, Dawson, Dundy,
Frontier, Gosper, Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith,
Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow, Thomas
200 South Silber, Bldg. #2, North Platte, NE 69101
(308) 535-8100 V/TTY, (800) 272-3382 V/TTY
VR.Info.NorthPlatte@nebraska.gov

Omaha-Downtown serves counties:

Cass, Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy, Washington
1313 Farnam on the Mall, Omaha, NE 68102
(402) 595-2100 V, (402) 595-2107 TTY
(800) 554-3382
VR.Info.OmahaDowntown@nebraska.gov

Omaha-West serves counties:

Dodge, Douglas
12011 Q Street, Omaha, NE 68137
(402) 595-1212 V/TTY, (877) 240-4445 V/TTY
VR.Info.OmahaWest@nebraska.gov

Scottsbluff serves counties:

Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden,
Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, Sioux
1517 Broadway, Ste 131, Scottsbluff, NE 69361
(308) 632-1321 V/TTY, (800) 292-3382 V/TTY
VR.Info.Scottsbluff@nebraska.gov

South Sioux City serves counties:

Dakota, Thurston
901 West 21st Street, Ste 1,
South Sioux City, NE 68776
(402) 494-2265 V/TTY, (877) 659-7899 V/TTY
VR.Info.SouthSiouxCity@nebraska.gov

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301 Centennial Mall South, PO Box 94987,
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State Rehabilitation Council

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